



**TESTIMONY OF  
MARIE O'BRIEN  
BEFORE THE  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Friday, February 22, 2013**

***HB 6350, AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2015,  
AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO REVENUE***

Good afternoon. My name is Marie O'Brien and I am the Chairman of the Board of Directors for Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group. I am here today to testify **IN OPPOSITION TO HB 6350, AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2015, AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO REVENUE.**

The budget proposed by Governor Malloy will devastate our hospital and we need your legislative action to restore the funds vital to the health of our patients, our employees and our communities.

Bristol Hospital is a vital medical and emergency response "safety net" and large employer in our multi-town region. Whenever people need medical care, they know we are open and ready to help – 24 hours a day. We are dedicated to our mission of caring for everyone who walks through our doors, whether they can afford to pay or not.

And Bristol Hospital's contribution to the community extends beyond the clinical care and services that we provide.

The Bristol Hospital community benefits include frequent health and career fairs, as well as free health screenings, conducted by dozens of Bristol Hospital employees, sometimes using their own time for these important community events. They are joined by the hundreds of volunteers and corporators who are everyday ambassadors and educators for teaching good, healthy life choices.

One choice, and an example of what we can deliver effectively to help an entire family, is the Bristol Community Breast Project that has brought to hundreds of local women who cannot afford it, life-saving mammograms and proper screening to ensure breast health and wellness. These women become active, health wellness "teachers" for others in their families and neighborhoods.

Last November, the Bristol Hospital Medical Staff donated more than \$10,000 to help families in need through Bristol Hospital's Women's, Infants and Children's Program. Because of their generosity, approximately 180 families enjoyed a holiday meal at Thanksgiving. Our Medical Staff continuously makes monetary and service donations throughout the year for many individuals' and groups' unmet needs.

Our Parent and Child Center's primary focus is on the prevention of child abuse, neglect and family violence by providing support systems for families. Our programs target several areas that have been identified as crucial to developing strong, nurturing families including stress/anger management, child development and effective discipline. We are recognized for the leading quality of our program design and delivery to families in twenty towns surrounding Bristol. In fact the collaborative style in which these program leaders and staff work with other city and state organizations has won many accolades.

Our state's heroic first responders—those who have been in the news many times over the past few months—have come to rely on Bristol Hospital's EMS Training Center, which is known as a premier resource throughout the region. Our experts

offer a wide range of courses for pre-hospital providers and health care workers, including refresher programs for recertification.

But Bristol Hospital cannot continue to absorb the deep cuts that the administration keeps proposing. We need you, as legislators, more familiar with your local communities and their needs, to stand up for our mission, our employees, our doctors and nurses.

As a resident of Bristol and a long-serving community volunteer, I can testify to the services of hundreds of my peers who serve on the boards of our Connecticut hospitals in keeping costs in check, patient services at high quality levels and clinical outcomes measured against the best national benchmarks. We are able to achieve so much with so little because we are dedicated to a resource like Bristol Hospital in this very close-knit community. And with the hospital targeted to have almost \$4 million cut by the Governor over the next three years, many of the services we provide to the community are vulnerable. We are asking that you step up and support our hospitals – help us retain what we have developed over the years, especially our well-trained employees. Help us make these hospitals better by providing a solid and predictable financial platform we can depend on to achieve even greater health care results.

Not only is the fate of many of the families who depend on these programs at stake, but the jobs of those employees whose passion it is to care for and give back to those in the community are in danger as well.

This fiscal hit from the Governor has difficult consequences for Bristol Hospital as well as for all the hospitals in Connecticut. There are members of our community who rely on your expertise in knowing this is not an area that can sustain cuts; they are the ones waiting to see your actions. Many of our local families have their own struggles—please don't add to their burden by forcing hospitals to eliminate these vital programs.

We need stable hospitals.

Our patients are relying on you. Our staff is relying on you. Our communities need you to understand that in providing for our hospitals, you are enhancing our state. As you develop your budget, please protect Connecticut's hospitals.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

(end)